

REMARKS

Claims 1-15 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 5, 9-11 and 15 are amended and claims 16 and 17 are cancelled.

Applicants appreciate the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 5, 6 and 9.

Claim 12 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Claim 12 recites a hybrid vehicle comprising the driving apparatus according to claim 1. Claim 12 thus further limits the location in which the driving apparatus is located to a hybrid vehicle. Claim 12 is thus narrower than claim 1 and is proper. It is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 1-4, 7, 8 and 10-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Taniguchi et al. (Taniguchi), U.S. Patent No. 6,478,101. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 recites a cover that houses friction plates of the clutch, an actuator, and an input member of the clutch connected to the engine output shaft; a rotor of the motor that is integrally connected to the cover, which is the output member of the clutch; a front hub positioned at the engine side of the cover that is rotatably supported at a front wall member of the motor housing; and a rear hub positioned at the transmission mechanism portion side of the cover that is rotatably supported at a rear wall member of the motor housing.

Applicants assert that Taniguchi fails to disclose the front hub and the rear hub as defined by claim 1, and page 3 of the Office Action fails to identify the front hub and rear hub other than generally referring to Fig. 2. In addition, Taniguchi's input plate 51 (alleged cover) is not the output member of the clutch 3, and the input plate 51 does not house friction plates of the clutch 3, an actuator and an input member of the clutch 3.

Taniguchi discloses a clutch 3 interposed between a rotor 43 of the motor 6 that is connected to an engine output shaft 52 and an input shaft 10 of the transmission mechanism portion. Taniguchi thus fails to disclose a clutch interposed between an engine output shaft

and a rotor of the motor as recited in claim 1. Taniguchi's input shaft 10 is supported at the engine output shaft 52 by a centerpiece 31. Taniguchi thus cannot support the shaft center of a front cover with high precision because of the influence from vibrations of the engine, for example. Accordingly, an air gap between the rotor fixed to a front cover, and a stator fixed to a housing becomes large. It is therefore impossible to sufficiently exert the performance of a motor.

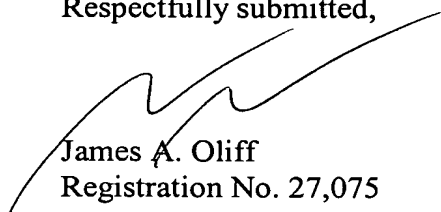
Applicants are able to overcome the problems presented by Taniguchi by the combination of features recited in claim 1. According to claim 1, the rotor of the motor is integrally connected to the cover, and the cover accommodates the friction plates of the clutch. The front hub and the rear hub, provided at a front portion and a rear portion thereof, are rotatably supported at the front wall member and the rear wall member of the motor housing. Accordingly, the cover is supported at the motor housing with high precision because of the double support configuration. Therefore, the precision for supporting the rotor integrally connected to the cover is high. In cooperation with the stator fixed to the motor housing, a gap (air gap) between the rotor and the stator can be controlled with high precision. Thus, the efficiency and ability of the motor can be improved. Taniguchi fails to discuss this concept or disclose the combination defined by the wherein clauses in claim 1.

It is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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